



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## ISOLATION OR WORLD LEADERSHIP? AMERICA'S FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY

BY GEORGE NASMYTH, PH.D.,

Secretary, Massachusetts Branch, League to Enforce Peace.

Is the future foreign policy of America to be that of isolation or of leadership in world politics? This is the question of principle which underlies our general theme, "What shall the United States stand for in International Relations" and it brings America to the cross roads of a great decision. If our discussion of a League to Enforce Peace is to have any practical bearing, it must be by affecting American foreign policy, for it is only through American foreign policy that we can affect international relations. This brings us to the critical issue of the next decade. I believe this will be the most wonderful ten years of human history. During these years we shall all have to line ourselves up on one side or the other of this great issue—the issue between world federation or of international anarchy.

Note that the line of division is not that between militarists or pacifists, nor between more armament or less armament, nor between preparedness or anti-preparedness. It is a clean-cut division between world federalists and anti-federalists. The old struggle which we had in those critical years of American history from 1783 to 1789 and continuing through the first half of the last century,—the struggle between national rights and state rights,—now is to be repeated on a world scale, with world rights as against national rights.

Now, this policy of leadership in world politics involves risks. I am surprised that this underlying question has not been debated before. In all the discussions that I hear about the League to Enforce Peace, I find the debate turning about minor points but not about this great issue of whether we shall abandon the traditional American foreign policy which pledges us not to interfere in European politics, whether we shall give up our policy of isolation and run the risk, as under the League's plan we might well be criticized

of doing, of getting involved in a war in Europe over unknown causes.

When this basic objection begins to appear, and I am sure that we shall get down to this fundamental question eventually, it seems to me that the reply is this: In the first place, we do not risk being involved in wars over unknown causes. There is only one cause for war under the League's program, and that is a violation, a deliberate violation, of solemn treaty pledges. In the second place, does not the present system of international anarchy involve risks? Have we not been in fact on the brink of war during the past year, ever since the *Lusitania* crisis, not knowing but what each morning we might wake up and find another ship torpedoed, more American lives destroyed, and a crisis coming on in which we should be dragged, by forces beyond our control, into the world war?

If we look back over the recurring international crises of the past year, it is clear that the real question which we have to decide is not isolation or world politics. That issue has been decided for us by the events of the past century. The world has become so small, as the result of the work of the scientists and engineers, and the growth of the means of communication, that we can no longer remain aloof from the life of the other nations. We have been elected citizens of the world, without either our knowledge or consent. Even now we are being taxed without representation to carry on this war, and we shall be taxed still more heavily in the economic crises which this war will produce in the future.

The real issue, then, is this: Shall we shut our eyes to the plain fact that we have become a part of the world, and try to keep up an impossible policy of isolation, and then be dragged in at the heels of a great militaristic development of the world if Europe remains an armed camp? Or shall we frankly recognize the facts and take a boldly constructive initiative and ask the other nations to join with us in organizing the world? On this question the League to Enforce Peace speaks in unmistakeable terms; its object is to convince American public opinion that the only rational policy is to stand, not for international anarchy, but, world organization under justice and law.

Now, how is such a League of Nations to be brought about? It has been suggested that the peace conference which ends the war will be the best opportunity. Others have suggested that the third

Hague Conference, following after the war, will be the time. The League's program specifically states that its object is to establish and maintain peace after the close of the present war. But I believe that at the present time there is an opportunity to make a great advance in this direction of world organization. Suppose that President Wilson should offer to the belligerent nations, not merely a formal tender of good offices, but a constructive plan of mediation, based on an understanding of the real purpose for which the people in all the nations are fighting—security against the danger of aggression in the future, and an opportunity to develop their civilization in peace. Suppose he should make a simultaneous proposal to the warring nations in terms something like these:

**Will you, Germany, agree to evacuate Belgium and Northern France and Northern Serbia; to compensate Belgium; to enter into a league to enforce peace which will guarantee all nations against the danger of aggression in the future?**

And suppose that at the same time he should say to the Allies:

**If Germany accepts these conditions, will you agree to discuss terms of peace? If not, what are the definite terms of settlement which you will take as a basis for discussion?**

In order to give these proposals carrying power, we should at the same time signify that America is willing to do its share towards the reconstruction of the new world order by agreeing to (1) become one of the guarantors of Belgium's neutrality after the war; (2) throw the weight of our economic resources against any nation which shall violate the neutrality of any independent buffer states, such as Poland, which may be created; and (3) become a member of a league of nations to enforce peace, thus giving Germany and all other countries additional guarantees of national security under a system of world law and order.

In other words, we have the opportunity, by a constructive offer of mediation of this kind, to get a discussion of definite terms of settlement under way, and once under way, this discussion would soon lead to a much clearer understanding of the real issues of the war than we have at present.

And there is one other way in which we may make an advance—the formation of a Pan-American League of Peace. We have ad-

vanced very far in that direction with the offer which Secretary Lansing has made to the ambassadors and ministers of the Latin American republics. Here we are really proposing a League to Enforce Peace, with at least an economic sanction—non-shipment of arms and ammunition to the states which violate their agreements or to revolutionary parties which do not represent a majority of the people.

Lastly, there is still an opportunity for an action which, to my mind, should have been taken a year or more ago,—calling a conference of neutrals. Great Britain, in her last note, has practically asked us to do that. It would be a conference to discuss our own neutral rights and help each other maintain them, but there might come out of this a constructive offer of mediation.

Here are at least three ways by which, before the end of the war, we may make definite advance toward the organization of the world. As soon as we have public opinion strongly in favor of a League of Peace, here is the opportunity by which America may almost immediately place herself in the leadership of this great constructive movement of modern history.